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Senate

The Senate met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable MEL MARTINEZ, a Senator from the State of Florida.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Lord of Hosts, thank You for being with us. Speak plainly to Senators today, sensitizing them to the needs of our Nation and world. Make them bold to do Your will at a time when evil often seems to have the upper hand. Give our lawmakers the insights they need to set their priorities by seeking to please You. Empower them with the courage to be the heart and hands of truth and righteousness.

Deliver us all from the mirage that there can be safety without You. May what we do here today bring joy to You, our source of hope for years to come.

Today, be especially close to Senator INOUE during this time of grief. We pray in Your holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable MEL MARTINEZ led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. STEVENS).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, March 14, 2006.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable MEL MARTINEZ, a Senator from the State of Florida, to perform the duties of the Chair.

TED STEVENS,
President pro tempore.

Mr. MARTINEZ thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, today we are immediately resuming debate on Senate Concurrent Resolution 83, the budget resolution. We start this morning with 40 hours remaining under the 50-hour debate limitation. Yesterday, Senators GREGG and CONRAD set up an order of amendments to be debated throughout the morning and afternoon. We now have six amendments lined up for consideration with each amendment debated for up to an hour. Votes on those amendments will occur in sequence beginning about 3 o'clock today.

Also, today are the weekly policy meetings. Normally, we would recess for those meetings, but we will need to allow debate to continue on proposed amendments occurring at that time. We will need to use up every other day effectively until the end of the week in order to finish the budget as well as the other item we will address this week, the debt limit extension. Both of those items will be completed this week. Therefore, if necessary, we will have votes throughout each day and into the evening.

On Wednesday, at 2, we will have a joint meeting with the House to hear an address by the President of Liberia. Senators should gather in the Chamber at 1:30 in order to depart at 1:40 to the House of Representatives.

HALABJA ANNIVERSARY

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, briefly, I wish to speak to another issue, an issue that relates to an anniversary that will occur on March 16. On March 16, 18 years ago, Saddam Hussein launched one of the most brutal and indiscriminate attacks against his own people. On that day, a group of eight Iraqi aircraft began dropping chemical munitions on the town of Halabja in northern Iraq. According to Kurdish commanders on the scene, the planes made multiple passes before their gruesome task was complete.

The planes would drop chemical munitions, including mustard agent and nerve gas, for 45 minutes. After they had gone, another group would come 15 minutes later to continue the assault with drop after drop after drop. They concentrated their attack on the city and the roads leading out to safety.

I had the opportunity to visit with a number of the Kurdish physicians about 2 years ago who described in detail to me what they saw and what they treated following these gruesome attacks. Many of the victims were drenched in liquid mustard gas, as well as these nerve agents, and others were breathing this toxic vapor. The physicians described to me the fact that this mustard gas and the nerve agents were segmented in parts of little hotels, where one week one wing would get a mustard gas, another a nerve agent, in order that the Saddam Hussein people would see which of these would be the most deadly, which would cause the most suffering.

After the onslaught, Saddam sent soldiers in their protective gear to study the impact in these wings of these hotels and throughout these communities. They wanted to see how effective and which agent would be most effective to be used in the future. The soldiers actually divided the city into

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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grids, determining the number and location of the dead and the extent of injuries inflicted on this defenseless population. More than 5,000 people were killed and another 10,000 were injured.

To see the images of the heaps of lifeless bodies and mothers still clutching their babies is to see a waking nightmare.

Eighteen years later, the people of Halabja are still suffering the effects. Physicians describe to me cancer and birth defects, stillborns and miscarriages. For the people of Halabja, the nightmare is still not over.

Nor did Saddam Hussein limit his use of weapons of mass destruction to just Halabja. He used these weapons of mass destruction to destroy scores of Kurdish towns and villages. These gruesome attacks were a part of a year-long campaign which resulted in the deaths and disappearances of more than 182,000 Iraqi Kurds.

These attacks bear on me heavily, as a Senator from Tennessee, because many of the Kurds migrated to Tennessee, especially the middle Tennessee area. Many live in Nashville. In fact, the other day as I was going through the airport, 20 or 30 of the Kurdish people came up to express to me their appreciation to the United States in receiving them and in Tennessee, in particular, for receiving them so well, so they could live lives that could move toward freedom and prosperity. Some of the people I now represent have friends and family who suffered at the hands of Saddam Hussein. He killed them. He tortured them. He oppressed the Iraqi Kurds for decades.

During the 1990s, the United States helped Iraq's Kurds achieve some degree of autonomy. Last year, we helped them achieve the right to vote for a Constitution and for a new Iraqi Government. The Kurds of northern Iraq knew for years what many Americans have been very slow to realize. Saddam and his chemical weapons were a threat not only to the Iraqi people but to the region, to our friends and our allies.

Saddam Hussein and his cohorts are now behind bars and standing trial for their crimes. Unlike the victims of his regime, they are being afforded the opportunity to defend themselves. The Iraqi people are committed to seeing justice done, they are bravely building a new order based on the rule of law and freedom. It has been a difficult journey, but they are working hard to reconcile their political differences and establish a government of national unity.

2005 was a year of progress. The Iraqis held three national elections. They approved a permanent Constitution. And thousands of young Iraqi citizens exhibited tremendous courage by joining the Iraqi security forces. They accomplished all of this in the face of vicious terrorist violence. The attack on the Golden Mosque in Samarra a few weeks ago was another cruel and craven attempt to ignite a civil war.

Iraq's political, ethnic, and religious leaders deserve credit for appealing for calm in working to diffuse the violence. They recognize that every Iraqi has a stake in their new democracy and that a free democratic and prosperous Iraq is in the best interests of all.

Their task now is to swiftly forge a national unity government so that leaders of Iraq's diverse population have the opportunity to peacefully appropriate the interests of their constituents. I am confident the Iraqi people will work to include all of Iraq's ethnic and religious communities in the democratic process. Indeed, they have no other choice.

Iraq's political leaders must come together and continue to work for national unity so that the Iraqi people can live in the freedom they deserve and so that tragedies such as Halabja remain irrevocably in the past. The fight for Iraq is far from over. Every day ruthless criminals are trying to smash all of the progress that has been made, but they will not succeed. Iraq has been set on a historic path.

This week, as we look back, we also press forward. With the continued courage and determination of the Iraqi people, Iraq will emerge a beacon of freedom and prosperity in the heart of the Middle East.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2007

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. Con. Res. 83, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 83) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2007, and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2006 and 2008 through 2011.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there are 40 hours equally divided remaining for debate.

Mr. GREGG. I ask unanimous consent the time consumed since 9 o'clock be credited to the budget time and the budget time be reduced by that amount of time and that it be allocated to our side.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GREGG. Mr. President, I understand Senator FEINGOLD will speak to the amendment offered by himself and Senator CONRAD and after Senator FEINGOLD finishes speaking, I ask we go into a quorum call with the time equally divided as was ordered.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wisconsin.

Mr. FEINGOLD. I thank the Senator from New Hampshire. I am very pleased to join the Senator from North Dakota in the pay-go amendment, which I understand he will be offering soon.

There is no Senator more dedicated to a fiscally responsible Federal budget and to restoring sound budget rules than Senator CONRAD. He is an acknowledged expert on the budget and the rules that govern its consideration. One might say he is the "Robert C. Byrd" of the budget.

You do not have to be a Kent Conrad to understand the pay-go rule. Our amendment is the same amendment one or the other of us have offered since the original pay-as-you-go rule expired a few years ago. It simply reinstates the pay-as-you-go rule that had been such an effective restraint on the fiscal appetites of Congress and the White House.

Over the past 5 years, we have seen a dramatic deterioration in the Government's ability to perform one of its most fundamental jobs, and that is balancing the Nation's fiscal books. In January of 2001, the Congressional Budget Office projected, in the 10 years thereafter, the Government would run a unified budget surplus of more than \$5 trillion. But little more than 5 years later, we face immense deficits and backbreaking debt.

This must stop. Running deficits causes the Government to use the surpluses of the Social Security trust fund for other Government purposes, rather than to pay down the debt and help our Nation prepare for the coming retirement of the baby boom generation.

Every dollar we add to the Federal debt is another dollar that we are forcing our children to pay back in higher taxes or fewer Government benefits. When we choose to spend on current consumption—through appropriated accounts or mandatory spending or tax cuts—without paying for that spending, we are robbing our children of the opportunity to have their own choices.

When we spend on our wants, by cutting taxes or through Government programs, without paying for those decisions, we are saddling our children and even our grandchildren with debts they must pay from their tax dollars and their hard work. That is not right.

That is why I am joining Senator CONRAD in his amendment to fully reinstate the pay-go rule. We need a strong budget process. We need to exert fiscal discipline.

When the pay-go rule was in effect, that tough fiscal discipline actually